1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

Springfield

361 ROWS OF FADED GREY HOUSES, HUDDLED CLOSE TO-
gether and facing on narrow dirt lanes, house the population
of Springfield, a Negro community lying west of Savannah
near the city waterworks. In the neighborhood are several
[368] wooden churches of various denominations, a well constructed
modern brick school building, and a number of stores that
supply the six hundred odd Negroes of the community.

771 Many of the houses are shuttered, dim and quiet. So
somber an atmosphere prevails that it is easy to imagine the
[787] spectral figures that the Negroes claim they see wandering
at night along the twisting pathways. It is not surprising
to be told of the sinister powers which are constantly at work
and against which many inhabitants of this locality are al-
ways on guard.

115 A familiar figure in the neighborhood is James Washing-
[791] ton,* famed locally as a fortune teller and root doctor. I
[759] is said that Washington's patronage is growing stead-
ily; [22a, c, 48] each day new clients visit his dilapidated house,
seeking advice or perhaps a cure for some puzzling ailment
that has descended upon them.

791 The consulting room is smoky, airless, and reeking with a
queer pungent odor. The shades are drawn down tightly,
347 and when a visitor is being given advice the door is shut se-
[352] curely against intrusion. The furniture is scant, consisting
of a lamp on a plain table, a couch for the visitor, and placed
directly across the room a wooden armchair in which sits the
•353 dealer in magic. The most remarkable object in the room is

* *James Washington, Springfield.*

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353 a "spirit picture," showing the head of one of the creatures of the "shadduh worl." The eyes are closed, the face bears a rapt, exalted expression, and the picture fades off into a dim mist of clouds.

791 787 Washington uses no cards or crystals. "I kin tell duh fewchuh jis by lookin at duh pusson," [22a] * he told us, "cuz I wuz bawn wid a double caul [4] wut wuz sabe fuh me till I wuz grown. Duh spirit show me ebryting. Ain many people hab duh powuh tuh see tings, but I got dis gif frum Gawd.

789 754 "I hab a deep knowledge uh magic. Deah's magic wut gahd yuh frum hahm an deah's ebil magic wut kin put yuh down sick aw eben kill yuh.[8] Wen yuh bin fix, yuh caahn git well wid regluh medicine.[15] Yuh got tuh git a han gense duh fixin.[6] Magic roots hep a lots.[48] Duh haiah is one uh duh mos powful tings yuh enemy kin git hole ub [10] cuz it grow neah duh brain an a han made outuh haiah kin sho affec duh brain."

754 791 The credulous neighbors constantly seek Washington's aid, for there is much talk of conjure among them. His recent acquittal on a charge of assault and robbery was interpreted as evidence that he possessed the ability to "fix duh cote so dey couldn nebuh sen im up."

754 [593] We were told of a woman who had a spell cast upon her by her own sister.[15] Wishing to verify our information, we decided to pay the unfortunate victim a visit.

[351] The house stood at the dead end of a narrow street. A high wall separated it from its neighbors and the barren ground encircling it was littered with refuse, tin cans, and large piles of rocks. A fierce looking dog prowled restlessly near the high arched gateway and bared his teeth at the intruders. At our request a neighbor obligingly called over the fence to the sick woman,* who a moment later came limping towards us.

* *Ryna Bryant, Springfield.*

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361 trim lawns, and the thoroughfare was shaded by old moss-hung trees. After a distance the road narrowed; for a time there were no houses in sight; then we came to the Low Bluff community. Negro cabins dotted the landscape and the settlement terminated at a grassy bluff where stood the last small house.

115 We were looking for Priscilla McCullough * and the obliging neighbors directed us to her house. It stood to the 342 left of the roadway, a queer haphazard little dwelling place that looked like something out of a fairy tale. It was a tumble-down house, painted white, its roof patched with pieces of loose roofing which overlapped one another and hung down some distance in the front. An irregular fence [351] made alternately of board and wire surrounded it. The tiny [352] porch was crowded with old pieces of furniture and miscellaneous items, including half of a tattered screen which hung [343] at one side. Near the house a second building leaned at such a precarious angle that it could be expected to tumble over momentarily.

115 We made our way down the little dirt walk and into the house and there in the center of the room sat Priscilla. She was sewing on a mattress which almost filled the small space. Even the bizarre exterior had not prepared us for the appearance of the inside of the house. Here again there was [353] so much crowded together that it took a while before separate articles could be clearly seen. Jumbled closely around Priscilla was a mass of furniture, each article of which was in turn almost hidden by a burden of clothing, dishes, bottles, pictures, and items too numerous to mention.

[416] Priscilla adjusted her eyeglasses which were tied on with a shoestring and told us something of her early life. She said she had been "bawn tree yeahs fo freedom in Sumtuh, Sout Calina." As quite a young woman she had moved to

* *Priscilla McCullough, near Darien.*

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to give way to a growth of towering oaks; then it joined again, resuming its winding trail through the quiet, shadowed countryside.

The little settlement now known as Harrington was formerly the property of the Demere family. A little less than a mile north of this settlement was Harrington Hall, home of Raymond Demere, who came to this country with Oglethorpe after serving ten years under Lord Harrington at Gibraltar.

To the left of the road was a small unpainted store operated by Ryna Johnson's daughter with whom she lived. Various advertisements on the front of the small building gave splashes of color to the green of trees and foliage.

Set back from the store was Ryna's house, surrounded by an expanse of short grass upon which a horse was grazing. The house was weathered with age, as were the vertical boards of the fence that enclosed the garden; here and there in the fence a new unpainted board, regardless of length, had replaced an old, and the top presented an irregular, jagged pattern. The cabin was the usual two-room affair but with a hall through the center and a lean-to in the back. The walls were papered with newspapers and, although there was a motley collection of objects and furniture, everything was scrupulously clean.

Ryna * was blind from cataracts and had not been feeling very well; so she had just got up from bed. Although her body was bent and very feeble, her mind was still clear.

"Ise bout eighty-five yeahs ole, but I caahn tell zackly. I belong tuh duh Coupers wen I wuk on duh plantation. It bin sech a long time I mos stop studyin bout dem days. But I membuh we use tuh hab good times."

In answer to our inquiry regarding any Africans whom she had known during plantation days, Ryna told us, "Alexanduh, Jummy, an William, dey is all African. I membuh ole William well an he tell me lots bout times in Africa. Dey

* *Ryna Johnson, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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South Carolina

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Gullahs worshiping in Goose Creek Church. (Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society, New York.)

[p. ii]

[p. i is blank]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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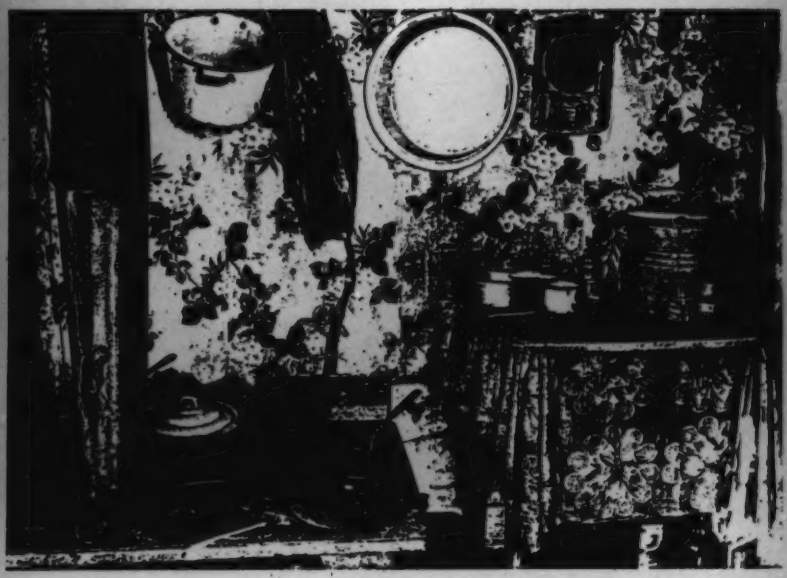

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p.26]

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

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Mr. Esau Jenkins

THEY PAINTED IT BLACK

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I haven't gotten any further than the fourth grade in grammar school here. I had to work, and because of that I had to leave school. And then too, the school we had here wasn't encouraging to go to. We had around fifty children and one teacher with a one-door school.

(177) And beside that, they painted it black, that we could be identified as to who go to the school. It discouraged me when I got some pride. I left school and went to Charleston and started working on a boat. But I still was serious about getting my education. I know I couldn't have done anything out of a fourth-grade education.

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Then I got married some years later and find out that I have a great responsibility, and I know that my education was limited. So I decided that I would work and go to school at the same time. I went four years more, which help me to transact my own business, and now I'm happy to say that

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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533 The story of how "I Will Overcome" became "We Shall Overcome" is a fascinating one, and much of the history is in the South Carolina lowcountry area. "I Will Overcome" was widely known in black churches throughout the South. The first time it was used in an organized protest situation was in Charleston in 1945, when the Food and Tobacco Workers were out on strike for five months and had a daily picket line. The striking workers, mainly black women, began to adapt the song to fit their situation. They changed the *I* to *we* and sang, "We will win our rights" and "We will organize" and "The Lord will see us through." Workers from the Charleston situation took the song to Highlander where it became the unofficial theme song for years and was carried to many other picket lines by Zilphia Horton of the Highlander staff. Pete Seeger learned it from Zilphia and began introducing it to northern gatherings and northern audiences. Guy Carawan heard it from Pete and others, and through his work at Highlander, helped pass it back into the southern freedom movement in the early 1960s. From there it went around the world.

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Mrs. Janie Hunter

I FOUND OUT I HAD SOMETHING I DIDN'T KNOW I HAD MYSELF

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When we started to travel, we had a lot of criticism. Everyone didn't like it, but that didn't stop me. They didn't understand. I try to let them know that when we're doing these different programs, it really establish Johns Island. We put Johns Island on the map.

And I was carrying my children since they was six and seven years old. My children hardly be bashful. They really experienced something and they learned a lot. They went to Rhode Island twice; they went to New York. And several times to the Smithsonian in Washington. They learned to face people and be what you are.

I enjoyed every bit of it. The travel taught me a lot. I saw places I wished for many years I could see. My dream did come true. When I was young I hoped I could travel and see something, and I did. I learned something in traveling that I never learned in school. You couldn't tell if we were black or white from the treatment we got. That means a lot. Treatment is what cause love.

So I feel good about it because I could show somebody something that they didn't know. Although they finished college and have education, I feel like I have something that they wanted. I found out I had something I didn't know I had myself. And that makes me feel like going on with it. And if there's anything I can do to help somebody learn something they don't know, I'll be glad to do it.

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9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Georgia
St. Simon's Island

Another custom, more widespread than is generally known, probably originated in Africa. When a new building is completed it is christened with prayer and song, followed by shouting. The afternoon Joe and Clarence finished the Cabin, (Illustration 12)[A] Clarence made a prayer and asked a blessing, Julia put rice in the four corners for good luck, and after a few songs it was considered that the building was auspiciously launched.

The addition to the original Cabin was *not* blessed. It is a curious fact that the roof developed leaks at once, termites got into the floor, and it was necessary to rebuild the whole section. If such bad luck continues, it will look as though the Sapelo idea is not far wrong. There, it is considered most unwise to put on an addition to an old house. "You will lose some member of your family if you do."

In the papering of the Cabin, on my own initiative, I took another precaution which has afforded the singers much amusement. The walls of many small cabins are covered with news-print, because the prevailing idea in the old days was that a hag had to read every word before she could work evil on you.[39] I used the financial section of *The New York Times* for good measure. In the accompanying illustration (Illustration 14)[B] it can be seen how this original type of wallpaper enhances the picture made by the singers, and separates them from their background. It was made during the closing song—"One a These Days, My Sister"—when Willis was shaking the hand of Bessie in accordance with the usual custom at prayer meeting in a less sophisticated era.

DeZayas, in *African Negro Art*, tells of an exceedingly sensitive devil at Sierra Leone, who requires the utmost respect, and, if not propitiated by liberal offerings of palm wine, rice, and fowl, will certainly bring trouble to those invoking his intervention. Every time he is consulted, rice flour must first be offered. However, our Negroes disclaim any knowledge of their reason for using rice at a housewarming, except to bring good luck.

Chance often enables us to discover new examples of the general belief in occult forces. Such was the case when a friend and I heard a cracking report in my empty kitchen. On investigation we found that a glass bowl had broken in half. The next day Julia told me it is a sure sign that some member of your family is going

[39] A similar notion is held in Nassau according to M. Cavel in "Items of Folk-Lore from Bahama Negroes," in Vol. 17 of the Journal of American Folk-Lore. "If you think you are being hagged, take a pint of benne seed . . . and guinea corn . . . spill it all in the four corners of your house; that will catch the hag as she cannot leave the house before she has picked up all the seeds, one by one, during the night."

A, [For Illustration 12, see Category 342, plate facing p. 80--Analyst]
B, [For Illustration 14, see Category 353, plate facing p. 96--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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14. *Farewell Song in the Cabin*

[facing p. 96]